

conservation. The host country places local currency in its tropical forest fund that typically exceeds the cost to the U.S. Government of the debt reduction agreement. So we are leveraging funds.

Furthermore, because these tropical forest funds have integrity, are broadly supported within the host country, we have found that conservation organizations are interested in placing their own money in these tropical forest funds, which of course produce additional leverage of the Federal conservation dollars that we are providing.

There have been eight TFCA agreements included to date: Bangladesh, El Salvador, Belize, Peru, the Philippines, Colombia, and actually two now with Panama. \$49.3 million in Federal contributions have gone into these agreements and \$6.3 million in private contributions from these conservation NGOs under these eight agreements. Through this we have generated \$81.4 million in long-term income commitments for tropical forest conservation, so the leverage is out there and is working.

The second Panama deal actually was just signed last month. Under this agreement, the U.S. Government contributed \$6.5 million to reduce debt, and the Nature Conservancy contributed \$1.3 million in a second round of agreements now that will generate nearly \$11 million for tropical conservation over the next 12 years.

This agreement with Panama, along with the previous one, now provides over \$21 million in total funds available for conservation purposes. This is a great agreement that helps protect the biologically rich forest of Darien National Park.

Active deals are also being negotiated with Jamaica and Sri Lanka. Other countries that have expressed interest in the program and who have eligible debt include Guatemala, Ecuador, Paraguay, St. Vincent, Botswana, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, India, Indonesia, Brazil, and Kenya.

H.R. 4654 will improve and refine the Tropical Forest Conservation Act, as was discussed earlier, by better funding audits to ensure the program is operating as expected and as intended and by broadening the governments that can participate by allowing principal, not just interest, to be reduced and to be redirected into these conservation funds.

The bill does have an authorization here of \$20 million in fiscal year 2005, which is included in the President's budget request.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to take a moment, if I could, to just thank all those who have gotten us to this point and worked so hard on this reauthorization bill. I want to thank those people like Bill Millan and Steve McCormick of the Nature Conservancy; Randy Snodgrass, Melissa Moye and Estrelitta Fitzhugh of the World Wildlife Fund; Kelly Keenan Aylward with the Wildlife Conservation Society; and

Nicholas Lapham with Conservation International.

From the administration, I want to thank the Council on Environmental Quality; also Joel Kaplan and Robin Cleveland of OMB; Bill Schuerch and Katie Berg of the Treasury Department; Claudia McMurray, Stephanie Caswell and Teresa Hobgood of the State Department; Jim Hester with USAID; Scott Lampman and others.

In Congress, I want to be sure and thank Kristen Gilley and David Killon of the Committee on International Relations, minority and majority staff; and Mark Synnes of the House Legislative Counsel for helping us to draft the bill; and at CRS we got some great help from Pervaze Sheikh. For his excellent analysis of the program, I want to thank him. And, finally, I want to thank Tim Miller of my staff and Justin Louchheim, who have taken a personal interest in this and their commitment to it over the years.

Again, this is a good program, it is working well, and worthy of reauthorization. I urge all Members to support strongly this market-based approach that is working to conserve the world's most threatened tropical forest.

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, the legislation before the House continues a vitally important environmental initiative begun during the Clinton Administration. The Tropical Forest Conservation Act has already resulted in the funding of programs to conserve over 40 million acres of endangered tropical forests around the globe. These preservation efforts are critical to long-term U.S. interests as the tropical forest being saved are estimated to contain 50–90 percent of the earth's terrestrial biodiversity.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to have had the opportunity to co-sponsor this reauthorization with Congressman ROB PORTMAN. Congressman PORTMAN deserves credit for having the foresight to initiate this program with the original authorization he crafted in partnership with the former chairman of the International Relations Committee, Mr. Lee Hamilton, in 1998.

Mr. Speaker, the Tropical Forest Conservation Act has been a tremendous success. It has allowed the governments of developing countries to get the benefit of improving their local ecosystem when paying down interest owed on debt to the United States. It is supported by a broad spectrum of environmental advocacy organizations led by the Nature Conservancy and the World Wildlife Fund.

This program inspires more prompt debt servicing and gives foreign governments a greater sense of responsibility for preserving the global environment.

Already the U.S. has entered into binding bilateral agreements with seven countries: Bangladesh, Belize, El Salvador, Panama, Peru, the Philippines and Colombia. These agreements will generate \$70 million for tropical forest preservation.

The most recent agreement has produced a pledge by Colombia to invest \$10 million over 12 years to protect nearly 11 million acres of its tropical forest.

Among the areas that will be preserved in Colombia as a result is the Tuparo National Park. This unique forest contains a rich diversity of species including jaguars, river dol-

phins, the endangered giant armadillo and the critically threatened Orinoco crocodile, which is found only in this part of South America. The area is also a major winter base for migrating bird species from the United States.

Mr. Speaker, the rapid disappearance of tropical forests is a threat to our national security. We need these forests to regulate the global environment. They act as critical "carbon sinks", absorbing massive quantities of carbon dioxide that otherwise would contribute to global warming. They also regulate rainfall, which is critical to maintaining sustainable agricultural production across the globe. In addition, their diverse plants provide a large percentage of life-saving medicines. Therefore, as the forests disappear, some of our opportunities to cure debilitating illnesses also vanish.

Mr. Speaker, I strongly support passage of this legislation, and urge my colleagues to do so as well.

Ms. MCCOLLUM. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests at this time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I also have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PENCE). The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4654.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until approximately 6:30 p.m.

Accordingly (at 3 o'clock and 13 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess until approximately 6:30 p.m.

□ 1830

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. KLINE) at 6 o'clock and 30 minutes p.m.

REPORT ON HOUSE RESOLUTION 700, DIRECTING THE ATTORNEY GENERAL TO TRANSMIT DOCUMENTS IN THE POSSESSION OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL RELATING TO TREATMENT OF PRISONERS AND DETAINEES IN IRAQ, AFGHANISTAN, AND GUANTANAMO BAY

Mr. SENSENBRENNER, from the Committee on the Judiciary, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 108-658) on the resolution (H. Res. 700) directing the Attorney General to transmit to the House of Representatives documents in the possession of the Attorney General relating to the treatment